

To the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee  
Senator John W. Fonfara  
Representative Jeffrey J. Berger

Testimony regarding elimination of the Community Investment Act.  
Re: An Act Concerning Revenue Items to Implement the Governor's Budget. Section 29

The Governor is proposing a sweep of CIA funds:  
\$15 million to balance this year's budget (FY15-16) and \$41 Million for FY16-17  
Under the CIA, a \$40 recording fee is collected on every real estate transaction. The fees are then distributed in support of the following: 1) preserving farmland 2) protecting open spaces 3) historic preservation and 4) creating affordable housing.

I submit the following testimony on behalf of Main Street Waterbury to urge you to keep CIA funding where it belongs and where it was originally intended to go.

The Connecticut Main Street Center's **Come Home to Downtown** program has been funded through CIA funds and Waterbury was a pilot city for this program. The viability of a key component of the Waterbury NEXT initiative, supported by Governor Malloy, is the redevelopment of the Lombard Building, which was the focus of the Come Home to Downtown program. This award-winning program offers technical assistance and guidance on rehabilitating small, under-utilized downtown properties into housing above commercial space.

CIA funds also provide the source funds for CMSC's **Preservation of Place** grant-eligible only to CMSC members.

Since the program's inception in 2008, CMSC has distributed \$466,000 in POP grants to our members, which have leveraged over \$1 million in investment in our downtowns.

To date, over \$120 million has been given back to 157 Connecticut towns since the Act's inception in 2006, creating some 3,000 jobs in the process. Main Street Waterbury was able to conduct several feasibility studies for mixed use development conversions of our historic downtown buildings utilizing POP grants. In addition, MSW established a comprehensive downtown Waterbury Parking marketing strategy, with POP grant funds, which included an award winning website to educate the general public about all parking options in downtown Waterbury.

Sweeping these funds sends the wrong message to constituents as to why they are collected in the first place and runs counter to the Governor's intent to economically rejuvenate our downtowns and stimulate future job creation.

As the Governor proposes "lock boxing" transportation revenues for his bold transit proposal. We believe that CIA funds are just as important an investment. The CIA supports our Infrastructure of Place - pristine open space, vibrant historic town centers, working farms and housing choices for all Connecticut residents. While investing in a world class transportation infrastructure is important, without CIA funds we may very well end up with roads and trains to places no one wants to go.

Thank you,

Carl Rosa  
CEO  
Main Street Waterbury  
203-757-0701 ext. 302

